

a fundamental question of coverage. All workers, including skilled and professional workers, have the right to organize. The RESPECT Act does not allow true supervisors to engage in organizing or collective bargaining. But it ensures that those individuals who are excluded from the NLRA's protections due to their supervisory status do indeed carry the genuine prerogatives of management. I urge all of my colleagues to stand with me as we fight to return these fundamental protections to millions of workers who deserve the chance to win livable wages, fair benefits, decent working conditions, and a brighter future for their families.

HONORING STEPHEN TRACHTENBERG AS HE STEPS DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2007*

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, when I graduated from George Washington, I like to sometimes think only a few years ago, I did not realize that I would be so involved with the school later in my life. President Trachtenberg has made these efforts a joy and an honor, and we will miss his leadership.

His tenure as president transformed the university, marking major advancements across the board. Since taking the helm in 1988, the academics of GW have skyrocketed. The SAT scores of incoming students rose by 200 points and a significant percentage of students are now drawn from the top 10 percent of high school classes.

While enriching the academic environment at George Washington, President Trachtenberg also enhanced the financial situation. The school enjoyed a balanced budget under each year of your tenure, generating an endowment of nearly \$1 billion, up almost \$800 million since you started in 1988.

As Steve has often noted, GW has eight schools, over 100 programs, and nearly 20,000 students. And he adds, "GW is more than a university, it is also a community." Through his outstanding efforts, the university encompasses academics, research, entertainment, and an enjoyable experience for students, faculty and staff.

In total, 30 years of his amazing career went into leading a major university. He deserves more time at home, applying his energy and talents to his personal life. I understand his wife Francine is retired, but still very active in promoting the community's interest, and I bet she could use his help.

It has been an honor to work with President Trachtenberg on behalf of George Washington University—his tireless efforts have yielded immeasurable results—the school, Washington, D.C., our nation, and the world are better because of them.

## JUDICIAL DISCLOSURE RESPONSIBILITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 21, 2007*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1130, the "Judicial Disclosure Responsibility Act," because it extends until December 31, 2009, the authority conferred by the Congress on the Judicial Conference to redact personal and sensitive information from the published financial disclosure reports of judges and judiciary employees who have been threatened or otherwise have particular security risks.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated, H.R. 1130 would temporarily extend the authority of the Judicial Conference to withhold from disclosure certain personal and sensitive information of judges and judiciary employees. In addition, the bill expressly provides that concern for the safety of a judge's family as well as that of the judge is sufficient grounds to exercise the authority given. The bill, however, requires the Judicial Conference to provide detailed reports regarding such redactions to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the financial disclosure requirements were imposed by Congress in 1978 in response to the constitutional issues surrounding the Watergate crisis and the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon. The Ethics in Government Act was passed in 1978 and promotes ethics and openness in government by establishing rules of conduct for federal employees to reduce corruption and prevent the improper use of knowledge gained while employed by the government, and more broadly to prevent the appearance of impropriety.

The Ethics in Government Act of 1978 ("Act") applies to all branches of government, including the federal judiciary. Persons covered by the Act are required to disclose personal and financial information each year, including the source and amount of income, other than that earned as employees of the United States government received during the preceding calendar year. They must also disclose the source, description, and value of gifts for which the aggregate value is more than a certain minimal amount received from any source other than a relative; the source and description of reimbursements; the identity and category of value of property interests; the identity and category value of liabilities owed to creditors other than certain immediate family members; and other financial information. Under the Act, these reports are made public.

Among the types of sensitive personal information that might be disclosed in these reports are personal residences, the workplace of spouses, the name and location of a child's school; and an employee's vacation home.

In 1998, 20 years after the enactment of the Ethics in Government Act, the potential of these types of disclosures to place individual judges at serious risk of personal harm had become manifest. In 1979, U.S. District Court Judge John Wood, Jr., was fatally shot outside of his home by assassin Charles Harrelson. The murder contract had been placed by Texas drug lord Jamiel Chagra, who was awaiting trial before the judge.

In 1988, U.S. District Court Judge Richard Daronco was murdered at his house by

Charles Koster, the father of the unsuccessful plaintiff in a discrimination case. The following year, U.S. Circuit Court Judge Richard Vance was killed by a letter bomb sent to his home. The letter bomb was attributed to racist animus against Judge Vance for writing an opinion reversing a lower-court ruling to lift an 18-year desegregation order from the Duval County, Florida schools.

In light of these and other tragedies, Congress responded by adding a new subsection to the Ethics in Government Act temporarily authorizing the Judicial Conference to redact information from judges' financial disclosure reports under certain circumstances. Under that subsection, a report may be redacted "(i) to the extent necessary to protect the individual who filed the report; and (ii) for as long as the danger to such individual exists." The Act further charged the U.S. Judicial Conference, in consultation with the Department of Justice, with the task of submitting to the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary an annual report documenting redactions.

In 2001, the House of Representatives approved a bill striking the sunset clause and making the redaction authority permanent but the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee did not concur. The Senate was concerned that such authority could hamper the effectiveness of the judicial confirmation and oversight process by unwarranted reliance on the redaction authority to avoid revealing stock holdings and other financial assets, and in some cases, the complete withholding of all financial information contrary to the intent of the statute. Ultimately, Senate recommended extending the redaction authority for 4 more years, until December 31, 2005. This authority has now expired and necessitates the extension provided by H.R. 1130.

Mr. Speaker, the Judiciary Committee considered and properly rejected permanently granting this authority to the Judicial Conference because of the legitimate concern that such authority could be abused in such a way as to withhold information that properly should be disclosed. A temporary 4-year extension, on the other hand, would effectively allow for a more in-depth investigation of areas of concern before Congress must decide whether to make the authority permanent. I believe this is the most prudent way to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1130 because it preserves an important means of protecting the safety of those who work in the federal judiciary. Particularly in this age of the global war on terror, the danger faced by federal judges, judicial officers, and court personnel is real, as illustrated by the three murders noted above. The recent and tragic murder of U.S. District Court Judge Joan Humphrey Letkow's husband and mother reminds us that the danger has not abated.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1130 and urge by colleagues to do likewise.

## 186TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2007*

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 186th Anniversary of Greek Independence Day.